

SPIDERS EATING SNAKES.

In a communication to the Biological Society of Sao Paulo, Brazil, July 8, 1925, Drs. Brazil and Vellard give an account of a spider which eats snakes, frogs and lizards in preference to insects. I am indebted to Dr. Amaral from Brazil who is now in Cambridge for translation of part of this paper.

The spider, *Grammostola acteon* Pocock, is one of the large Aviculariidæ commonly known as "tarantula." The body of a male is 60 mm. in length, the thorax 24 mm., the abdomen 36 mm., the legs 60 to 72 mm. The female is somewhat larger with shorter legs.

One of these spiders, kept in confinement, refused for some time to eat insects which were offered to it. One day a small frog was put in with it and the spider at once pounced upon it, crushed it with its jaws and fed upon it. The same experiment with other individuals and other kinds of frogs showed that the spiders preferred the frogs to insects. Small snakes were then given to them, and they took these as readily as they did also small lizards.

When a *Grammostola* and a young snake are put in a cage together the spider tries to catch the snake by the head and will hold on in spite of all efforts of the snake to shake him off. After a minute or two the spider's poison takes effect, and the snake become quiet. Beginning at the head, the spider crushes the snake with its mandibles and feeds upon its soft parts, sometimes taking 24 hours or more to suck the whole animal, leaving the remains in a shapeless mass.

In a large cage with snakes 25 to 45 centimeters long, frogs and insects, the spiders will generally neglect the insects.

The *Grammostola* does not feed with much regularity. One individual took 48 hours to suck a frog 6 cm. long. Two days later it ate a small snake, *Crotalus terrificus*, on the third day a frog, *Cyclorhamphus*, and the next day a snake, *Bothrops jaracara*, after which it was two weeks before it ate again.

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